

# Reach PLC

## Annual Statement to the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO)<sup>1</sup>

*For the period*

**1 January to 31 December 2018**

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<sup>1</sup>Pursuant to Regulation 43 and Annex A of the IPSO Regulations (The Regulations: <https://www.ipso.co.uk/media/1240/regulations.pdf>) and Clause 3.3.7 of the Scheme Membership Agreement (SMA: <https://www.ipso.co.uk/media/1292/ipso-scheme-membership-agreement-2016-for-website.pdf>)

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## 1. Foreword

The reporting period covers 1 January to 31 December 2018 (“the Relevant Period”).

## 2. Overview

Reach PLC is the largest news publisher in the UK.

Formerly known as Trinity Mirror PLC, the company changed its name following the acquisition of publishing assets of Northern & Shell Media Group Limited in May 2018.

Trinity Mirror was formed in 1999 by the merger of Trinity PLC and Mirror Group PLC. In November 2015, Trinity Mirror acquired Local World Ltd. Local World had been incorporated on 7 January 2013 following the merger between Northcliffe Media and Iliffe News and Media.

The company integrated its editorial complaints handling protocols for its newly acquired Northern and Shell titles from January 1 2019. This year’s statement will therefore consist of separate Trinity Mirror and Northern and Shell reports of their 2018 compliance with a general overarching introduction. As many procedures and policies inherited from Trinity Mirror PLC are unchanged, much of the 2018 report repeats the content of previous reports.

### 2.1 Publications & Editorial Content

During the Relevant Period, Reach plc published 5 National Newspapers, 170 Regional Newspapers (with associated magazines, apps and supplements as applicable). Some websites were consolidated into the “Live” brand during this period. A full list of Reach plc’s publications for the Relevant Period is attached to this document<sup>2</sup>.

## 3. Responsible Person<sup>3</sup>

Reach plc’s Responsible Person is Paul Mottram.

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<sup>2</sup> See 5.1 Annex A

<sup>3</sup> Pursuant to Clause 3.3.9 of the SMA

(<https://www.ipso.co.uk/media/1292/ipso-scheme-membership-agreement-2016-for-website.pdf>)

## 4. Reach plc

### 4.1 Editorial Standards<sup>4</sup>

The maintenance of high editorial standards is at the core of Reach plc's business. All editorial staff are contractually bound to adhere to the Editors' Code of Practice ("the Code") by the terms of their employment. Furthermore, all agencies and freelancers, who supply us with editorial material are required to comply with the Code.

As a mark of its commitment to the maintenance of such standards and to acknowledge and address the difficulties that are presented in the everyday course of fast-paced current events journalism, Reach plc's (then Trinity Mirror's) Board issued the following Risk Appetite Statement to senior management in April 2015:

[Reach plc] has no appetite for behaviours, past or present, that constitute a breach of IPSO's Editors' Code of Practice.

Reach plc has no appetite for behaviours or decisions that knowingly lead to the publication of inaccurate, misleading or distorted information.

We are committed to doing business in accordance with IPSO's Editors' Code of Practice. The Group recognises that protecting the rights of the individual consistently comes into conflict with the public's right to know and acknowledge that, as a consequence, we will have to make difficult judgements which are impossible to get right all of the time.

Reach plc has little appetite for errors or misjudgements in the normal course of business, but as stated above, the Group recognises that the business of publishing information – particularly when it is done quickly in the digital environment - brings with it a level of risk that mistakes will occur. However, the Group will continually seek improvements to its behaviours, processes and systems in order to ensure that the risk of errors is mitigated and that the correct judgements are made in balancing the rights of the individual and the rights of the public to know.

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<sup>4</sup> Pursuant to Clause 3.3.1 to 3.3.3 of the SMA  
(<https://www.ipso.co.uk/media/1292/ipso-scheme-membership-agreement-2016-for-website.pdf>)

## Pre-publication Guidance from IPSO

We have had occasion to consult with IPSO and, historically, the PCC over pre-publication guidance, primarily with “borderline” judgments involving the privacy of photographs etc. We have also consulted over issues such as the updating of stories with new information when there is an outstanding IPSO complaint.

## IPSO Notices

Notices and warnings received from IPSO are distributed to the relevant editorial staff as soon as possible together with legally privileged guidance, if appropriate.

## Verification of Stories

Reach plc expects its staff to use their best endeavours to verify the stories that are put forward for publication. Stories involving potentially contentious issues are reviewed by the newsdesk and then legal/Code compliance advice is generally sought from the legal department before publication. Code compliance issues are also considered on our regional titles by Managing Editors if serious allegations are being made. Furthermore, journalists are encouraged to seek comment from the subjects of stories where appropriate.

Reach plc's policy on provenance is as follows:

### Provenance

Editorial executives on all our titles are reminded that it is their responsibility to understand the provenance of material, both words and pictures, and to satisfy themselves that it has been appropriately obtained.

Journalists have an obligation under IPSO's Editors' Code of Practice to protect their sources, but we also have a duty to establish that the sources we use are reliable. Protecting our journalists' sources and insisting on knowing who our sources are, are not mutually exclusive.

Although they can delegate the authority where necessary, story provenance is ultimately the responsibility of the Editor.

In this area the Company relies on its integrity, experience and professionalism.

If there is an anonymous source, whether received internally or via an agency, the Editor must take this into account when making their judgement on whether to publish and in doing so must ask pertinent questions and seek legal advice if necessary.

Although there may, in certain circumstances, be good reasons why the actual identity of a source is not known to the Editor, uncertainty as to provenance should in itself be a reason to question whether a story should be published.

It is usual journalistic practice to approach the subject matter of a story for comment before publication if serious allegations are being made by a third party. Further guidance is provided as stories are filtered through Content Editors, and if appropriate, legal advice is sought and taken.

### The Trust Project

25 of Reach plc's news websites were founder members of the Trust Project [<https://thetrustproject.org>], which was launched in November 2017 as an international initiative, having been set up by Santa Clara University. As the integration with Northern and Shell titles continues, it is anticipated that the Daily Express, Daily Star and OK! Websites will also join this project. The project is supported by Google, Facebook and Twitter, and has brought media organisations across Europe and the Americas together to help readers make informed decisions about whether a news story is credible, quality journalism they can trust. Its three main commitments are "social responsibility, transparency and integrity". Fellow launch partners include the Washington Post, the Economist, the Globe and Mail, and La Stampa.

Each participating website now contains the Trust Project Logo next to IPSO's logo and includes:

- a letter from the editor explaining each site's coverage priorities, campaigning record and editorial ethos.
- an extended "About Us" page setting out journalistic values, key editors, ownership, funding, feedback and corrections and complaints mechanisms
- more information about Reach plc's writers, both on articles and on writer profile pages, reached by clicking on names shown in red at the top of stories.

## **4.2 Complaints Handling Process<sup>5</sup>**

Reach plc seeks to resolve complaints as quickly and amicably as possible when a mistake has been recognised, but will also defend its journalism when it believes that there has been no breach of the Code. In any event, Reach plc strives to reply to all complainants in a timely and courteous manner, regardless of the merits of the complaint.

Reach plc receives complaints from the public through several avenues: indirectly via IPSO referrals, directly via its Complaints Form (in accordance with its Formal Internal Complaints Process), and informally by telephone and/or email and from solicitors writing “letters before claim” in advance of legal proceedings.

### **4.2.1 Formal Internal Complaints Process**

#### **4.2.1.1 Print**

Every Reach plc printed news publication sets out details about its Complaints Process on page 2<sup>6</sup> of each edition in a column entitled “Corrections & Complaints”. The column includes a link to Reach plc’s “How To Make A Complaint” process, which is hosted on Reach plc’s website, [www.reachplc.com](http://www.reachplc.com). The website also hosts our Complaints Policy, the Code and our online Complaints Form.

The column also informs readers of Reach plc’s IPSO membership, together with IPSO’s contact details for advice, if required. Those complainants who do not have internet access are provided with an address to send off for a “Complaints Pack”, which includes a copy of our Complaints Policy, the Code and our Complaints Form.

Readers who wish to bring a factual error to our attention are directed to either the Editor or Readers’ Editor, who will arrange prompt corrections of admitted inaccuracies. In the overwhelming majority of cases, corrections, clarifications and/or apologies will appear either in the Corrections & Complaints column or elsewhere on Page 2.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Pursuant to Clause 3.3.4 of the SMA  
(<https://www.ipso.co.uk/media/1292/ipso-scheme-membership-agreement-2016-for-website.pdf>)

<sup>6</sup> (or as close to page 2 as possible if this is not possible for layout-related reasons, e.g. if there is a full page advertisement on page 2)

#### **4.2.1.2 Online**

Every Reach plc website carries a link on its home page, which sets out not only a link to Reach plc's Complaints Process, but also directs readers to email addresses where they can address issues about both simple, online factual errors and non-editorial matters. Each homepage also links to a "Corrections and Clarifications" section. Some corrections or amendments may however, in certain circumstances, be published underneath the original online article as a footnote clarification.

#### **4.2.2 Process**

Once a Complaints Form is received, the matter is handled by the Legal Department. The complaint is assessed to determine whether the Code has been engaged, whether there has been a misinterpretation of the Code and/or whether the complaint is vexatious.

Examples of complaints that would not engage the Code could be the non-delivery of a newspaper or an issue arising from a reader offer or competition. In any event, this kind of complaint would be directed to the appropriate department and a response issued.

An example of misinterpretation of the Code could be a complaint made under Clause 4 (intrusion into grief or shock) from a reader concerned about a general report (with which the complainant has no personal connection) about, for instance, a natural disaster. Another example could be a complaint made under Clause 12 from a reader objecting to the portrayal of a football team, i.e. these would be complaints about editorial matters that purport to engage the Code but upon analysis, do not.

Vexatious complainants include those who use insulting language or who do not set out the nature of their complaint under the Code.

In any event, if a correct contact address is provided, Reach plc endeavours to reply to all complainants within seven days.

If a complaint engages the Code, the matter is investigated internally and a response is sent. The response will either reject the complaint, if Reach plc is satisfied that there has been no breach of the Code, or, if there is a matter that does need addressing, discussions will then be held with the complainant in an attempt to resolve the matter.



If the matter cannot be resolved between the parties, the complainant is offered the option to refer the matter to IPSO to investigate.

#### **4.2.3 Referrals From IPSO**

The receipt of new complaints referred to Reach plc publications by IPSO engages Clause 13 of The Regulations<sup>7</sup>. As part of its internal Complaints Procedure, Reach plc corresponds directly with the complainant to address the issues at hand as set out above. If no resolution can be reached, the matter is referred back to IPSO for its consideration.

#### **4.2.4 Informal Complaints**

Many complaints are dealt with directly by the Editor or a senior journalist following telephone calls or emails. In the vast majority of cases, this is the most appropriate, expedient and amicable way of resolving complaints.

#### **4.2.5 Legal Complaints**

All legal complaints (classified as complaints which are accompanied by a demand for a financial remedy and refer to a cause of action) are handled by the Legal Department separately.

#### **4.2.6 Recording Of Complaints**

Complaints that are received by Reach plc either through its Complaints Form or from IPSO are recorded and assessed with regard to whether the Code has been engaged and which clauses have been addressed. Although complaints received on an informal basis throughout the regions are generally logged, given the minor nature of many issues and the disparate way these complaints are received and dealt with (orally, by telephone, letter, email etc.), it would be disproportionate for these types of complaints to be formally assessed in terms of the Code. The most important factor is that complaints are addressed, and if possible, resolved as quickly as possible.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ipso.co.uk/media/1240/regulations.pdf>

### 4.3 Training Process

From autumn 2014, Reach plc consulted with the Press Association (PA) and training company Eliesha over the creation of an online learning course with the purpose of making sure that all Reach plc journalists have a full understanding of the Code and the changes introduced by IPSO. The course contains ten animated and narrated modules. After viewing each module, editorial staff must complete a multiple choice assessment. Participants must score 100% in the assessment before they can move on to the next module and the course is only completed after the 100% pass mark has been achieved in all ten modules.

This compulsory course was rolled out and completed by all Reach plc editorial staff (from Editors and Executives to trainees) across the company in February and March 2015. All new editorial employees must also complete this training programme as part of their induction. The course is being reviewed following the acquisition of the Northern and Shell titles.

To supplement the online course, since 2015, Paul Mottram has been delivering seminars to executives and journalists throughout Reach plc at both regional centres and at Canary Wharf for the National Titles. These seminars examine each clause of the Code in turn, focussing upon the everyday practical application of the Code and examples of where Code breaches have occurred with a discussion on how similar issues could be avoided in the future. Upheld adjudications are also addressed.

We aim to alternate seminars each year between ex Local World titles/ National print and digital titles and pre merger Regional Titles. Last year, Paul Mottram returned to former Local World Regional Titles in 2018 to deliver seminars and to our Scottish National titles, which were live streamed to Scottish regional titles.

Reach PLC also welcomed IPSO executives to Canary Wharf during the summer for a series of seminars delivered to journalists from the Daily and Sunday Mirror, [mirror.co.uk](http://mirror.co.uk) and Sunday People. These seminars covered Code Of Practice issues that journalists regularly encounter.

Further, as part of continuing legal and regulatory education for journalists and to provide legal advice, since March 2017 the Legal Department has issued a series of regular Legal Bulletins to all staff, including Northern and Shell titles from January 2019. These legally privileged Bulletins detail any substantial compliance, legal or Code issues that have arisen during the previous weeks both within the company and from the industry generally, so that journalists can be made aware of, look out for and deal with similar issues that may arise in the future.

## 4.4 Our Record On Compliance<sup>8</sup>

During the Relevant Period, Reach plc published approximately 900,000 articles online, and over 10 million articles in National and Regional print titles.

In 2018, Reach plc received a total of 95 direct complaints through its online Complaints form. 30 of those complaints were resolved directly, and 44 were rejected outright as a non breach of the Code. However, settlement of a complaint does not necessarily indicate an admitted breach of the Code. Many of these resolved direct complaints did not represent a breach of the Code, however were resolved by offering a gesture of goodwill, for example the removal of information or the article. Additionally we received 21 complaints that did not engage the Code (e.g. newspaper delivery, general criticism of content, “right to be forgotten” and unformulated complaints). We aim to pass on complaints that are not Code related to the right department for a timely response.

Furthermore, Reach plc received a total of 118 complaints that were either referred to IPSO (i.e. following a direct complaint through our complaints form that was not resolved), or were received directly from IPSO. This report covers all upheld IPSO adjudications published in the Relevant Period.

There were 3 upheld adjudications within the Relevant Period, where there was a requirement to publish the adjudication or correction, and 8 upheld adjudications where the Complaints Committee ruled that sufficient remedial action had been offered by the publication. 26 complaints were not upheld by the Committee, 53 were settled, 15 were abandoned by the complainant and 8 were still pending at the end of the Relevant Period.

### 4.4.1 Remedial Action

When adjudication is upheld with a requirement to publish the adjudication , if appropriate, the matter is mentioned in the privileged and confidential monthly legal bulletin with advice on what went wrong (if any wrongdoing is identified) . Furthermore, such as those set out below, the Editor, Content Editor, and the journalist are informed of the outcome and the journalist is spoken to about the issue that had been identified. Details of upheld adjudications, published and adjudicated upon in the Relevant Period, are set out below:

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<sup>8</sup> Pursuant to paras. 3.3-3.4, Annex A of the IPSO Regulations (The Regulations: <https://www.ipso.co.uk/media/1240/regulations.pdf>)

#### **4.4.1 Upheld Complaints With A Requirement To Publish The Adjudication**

**03124-18; 03125-18; 03128-18 Anthony Fletcher v [www.mirror.co.uk](http://www.mirror.co.uk); [www.glasgowlive.co.uk](http://www.glasgowlive.co.uk); Daily Record/[www.dailyrecord.co.uk](http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk)**

The article said that the complainant had “fathered 22 children after illegally advertising his sperm on Facebook”. It also stated that “it is against the law in the UK to distribute or procure sperm and eggs without a licence from the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority”. The complainant said that the article was inaccurate to state that private sperm donations were illegal: the publication had misinterpreted the law, and he was not “procuring” or “distributing” sperm as a third party without a licence. The publication said that the original copy provided to it by an external agency had referred to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 as the basis for the claim that the complainant had acted “illegally”, and was published in good faith. The publication removed the online article, and offered to publish an online correction. The Committee was concerned by the seriousness of the breach of Clause 1 (i) in this instance: the publication had published a damaging allegation without checking its accuracy. In addition, the wording offered had not addressed the misleading impression created by the use of the term “black market”. For these reasons, the newspaper’s offer of a correction was insufficient. The complaint was upheld. The publication complied to IPSO’s ruling and published the adjudication in print and online.

**Date decision issued: 09/08/2018**

Further comment:

This was an error based on a failure to double check legislation. The Editor spoke to those involved about ensuring that these matters are researched more thoroughly.

**01444-18 The Department of Health and Social Care v Daily Mirror/[www.mirror.co.uk](http://www.mirror.co.uk)**

The article reported that Mr Hunt [the then Secretary of State] “refuses to apologise” over the winter health crisis in the sub-headline. It also reported that he had “arrogantly” told staff “they knew what they were signing up for”, in the body of the article, and in a picture caption.

The complainant said that it was inaccurate to report, in quotation marks, that staff “knew what they were signing up for” as it was misleading to paraphrase remarks in this way, and that he did apologise to patients, although he did not apologise to staff. The newspaper said that if it would

resolve the complaint, it would be happy to publish a clarification on page 2 and an online apology as a footnote clarification. The Committee considered that the correction offered by the newspaper as part of IPSO's attempt to mediate the complaint was insufficient. Publication of this ruling was required as a remedy to the breach. The publication complied with IPSO's ruling and published the adjudication in print and online.

**Date decision issued: 29/06/2018**

Further comment:

This was a subbing error on the front page that did not deal properly with the nuance of Mr Hunt's carefully worded apology over the Winter Crisis, which was to made to patients, but not to NHS staff. The matter had been made clear on the inside pages of the original story. The Editor and other senior staff explained to the team involved where the error had come from and the importance of correctly summarising the position and to properly attribute quotations.

#### **4.4.2 Upheld Complaints With A Requirement To Publish Correction**

##### **20364-17 David Taylor v Huddersfield Daily Examiner**

The article was a court report which described the details of a case in which the complainant pleaded guilty to two counts of making explosive substances. The online headline reported 'Boffin made bombs of the type used in 7/7 attacks – for a hobby'. The complainant said that the article was inaccurate, because he had not been accused or convicted of making "bombs". The publication conceded that the term "bomb" was never used in court, but said that the explosives the complainant made were described in court as major components of a bomb, and were stored in plastic bottles and jars, where the definition of a bomb is "a container filled with explosive or incendiary material, designed to explode on impact".

The article explained that the complainant had intended to use these explosives for fireworks, and offered, as a gesture of goodwill, to amend the online headline. The Complaints Committee decided that the use of the word "Bombs" was a significant inaccuracy.

The complaint was upheld under Clause 1 (i) and 1(ii) and a correction was ordered. The publication complied with IPSO's ruling and published the correction.

**Date decision issued: 20/04/2018**

Further comment:

This decision was based on the interpretation of the meaning of the word “bombs”. IPSO accepted that the article made clear that there was no criminal intention behind the conviction because of the use of the word “hobby” in the headline. Reach plc also asked for a review of this matter because the Committee had sanctioned Reach plc under Clause 1(ii) for not publishing a correction sooner, despite the fact that Reach plc had defended itself on the basis that it did not believe that there was a significant inaccuracy. Reach plc believes that this policy has the tendency to put pressure on an editor to correct an article that she/he does not believe should be corrected in order to avoid an extra sanction if the Committee disagrees with that belief. The Review was not upheld. The Editor was made aware of the ruling and the matter was discussed with him.

#### **4.4.3 Upheld Adjudications Where Sufficient Remedial Action Had Been Offered**

##### **04135-18 Iqbal v [www.birminghammail.co.uk](http://www.birminghammail.co.uk)**

The article reported the content of a series of tweets issued by the council in relation to the complainant’s company, who had been prosecuted as part of a council ‘crackdown’ on dumped waste, “after dumping huge piles of waste around Aston”. The article concluded by stating that the complainant’s business had been “fined £10,500 for the fly-tipped waste”, plus costs. The complainant said that the article was inaccurate, as the court proceedings and fine had related to the production of documents relating to the disposal of waste, not to fly-tipping. As the article was based on the council’s tweets, the publication denied failure to take care. Subsequently the headline was amended accordingly and a footnote clarification was added to the online article. The Committee found that the clarification had been offered with sufficient prominence and promptness.

**Date decision issued: 26/10/2018**

Further comment:

Although there had been a fine, the nature of the offence had been misinterpreted. This was explained to the Editor and Journalist.

#### **04343-18 Chapman v Daily Mirror**

The article reported a suicide of a former mayor and named this individual as 'Gillian Chapman, 55'. The article also included a photograph of 'Gillian Chapman'. This information was provided to the publication by an external agency and was published in good faith. The article inaccurately reported that the former mayor of the Borough of Dacorum was dead, when in fact the inquest had related to another woman of the same name. Upon receipt of Ms Chapman's complaint, the publication immediately offered to write a personal letter of apology to the complainant, and to publish a correction on page 2 of the print newspaper. The Committee found that the publication had sufficiently and promptly offered a correction which addressed the inaccuracy within the article and included an apology for the error.

**Date decision issued: 10/08/2018**

Further comment:

This mistake was not made by any staff member at Reach PLC. It would be disproportionate for Reach to double-check every inquest/court story submitted by an agency as to whether or not they had correctly identified those involved with a hearing. There was nothing inconsistent in the article to arouse suspicion. The agency were aware of their mistake and were spoken to.

#### **03364-18 Bhardwaj v www.mirror.co.uk**

The article was headlined "I made £1 million at 16 and thought poor were scroungers - until I lived like one" - directly quoting the complainant to have used the term 'scroungers' to describe people of benefits. The complainant denied he had ever used this term. The publication had no record of the complainant ever using the word 'scroungers' in his interview, therefore the publication removed reference to this term in the online article and added a footnote clarification. The Committee found that the correction offered by the publication was sufficient to meet the terms of Clause 1(ii), and had already been published.

**Date decision issued: 06/08/2018**

Further comment:

This matter has been dealt with, by speaking to the Editors and journalists concerned and the general principle has been referred to in privileged legal bulletins to all staff. The lesson to be learned was not to try to summarise

what the complainant was trying to say by attributing words in quotation marks. In this case the gist of what the complainant was saying was also incorrectly summarised.

**01104-18 Hopkins v [www.mirror.co.uk](http://www.mirror.co.uk)**

This complaint was in relation to a social headline that was promoted online with the headline “Katie Hopkins banned from leaving South Africa after taking ketamine”. When clicked it linked through to the online article that was headlined ‘Katie Hopkins detained in South Africa for ‘spreading racial hatred’ after taking ketamine while collapsed in the street’. The publication argued that social headlines have to be short, and that the temporary ban had been imposed after the complainant had taken ketamine, and the main article headline and content had clearly reported this. However, the publication amended the social headline and added a subheading to the online article clarifying that the complainant was detained for ‘spreading racial hatred’. The Committee found that the newspaper had corrected the inaccuracy and had published a corrective note at the top of the article, which made clear the true position regarding the complainant’s detention in South Africa but still found that there had been a breach of Clause 1(i)

**Date decision issued: 02/05/2018**

**Further comment:**

This is a matter which should have been dealt with by Clause 40 of the Regulations. This was simple human error on a social media headline, on a story that all other Reach titles had reported correctly. An appropriate offer was made. It was rejected by the complainant. IPSO found that the offer was satisfactory so should have closed the case subject to the offer being fulfilled. Upon review, the Independent Reviewer decided that there were assumed conditions in Regulation 40, that were not part of the wording of the resolution and rejected Reach’s submissions on this point. The published correction attracted much comment and ridicule on social media because the factual position contained a far more serious allegation than the original incorrect social media headline. No remedial action was required.



A number of complaints were raised in relation to 8 articles. The article "Cops Swoop on £50m Taxi Tycoon" reported that the police had "swooped" on the complainant's offices and quoted a source suggesting that the police turned up 'out of nowhere' and 'took the place apart'. The council and police confirmed that it was a prearranged, routine meeting. In light of the complainant's concerns over the term 'swoop' the publication removed the article as a gesture of goodwill and published a stand alone correction and apology online and in print. The Committee found that the breach of Clause 1 had been appropriately remedied by the offer to publish a correction and an apology.

**Date decision issued: 06/09/2018**

Further comment:

The error was pointed out to the journalist.

**20437-17;19084-17 Stephenson-Wright v Manchester Evening News**  
**and Rochdale Observer**

The article reported that the complainant had been found guilty of three counts of rape, stating that the complainant had raped an underage boy, who later became a police officer, and had abused two others. The complainant disputed that he has been charged with rape of the child who became a police officer and advised that he had been found guilty of sexual abuse, not rape. In light of this, the publication offered to publish a correction clarifying this point. The Committee considered that the newspaper had promptly offered to publish a correction which addressed the significant inaccuracy and made the correct position clear.

**Date decision issued: 26/03/2018**

Further comment:

This was a matter of human error which was explained to those involved and the subject in general was dealt with in the Legal Bulletin.

### **02804-18 A woman v Sunday People**

The article 'For bedder or worse...' about a wedding reception at a swinger's club reported that the complainant's husband drove off from a hotel after an argument with the bride. The journalist, who had been present at the hotel, had believed that the complainant's husband had been driving a car that left the hotel shortly after the altercation and had video footage of this. However, upon receipt of the complaint and reviewing the footage, the publication accepted that it was not clear who was driving the vehicle. The Committee considered that this inaccuracy was significant as it was presented in the context of photographs of the complainant's husband consuming alcohol, which suggested that he had been drink-driving. The newspaper offered to publish a correction in print and online, which made clear the complainant's position that her husband had not driven away following an argument. The Committee had found that this offer was sufficient to meet the terms of Clause 1 (ii). However, the Committee required that the correction state that it was being published following an upheld accuracy complaint to IPSO as an adequate remedy to the breach of Clause 1 (i).

**Date decision issued: 03/07/2018**

Further comment:

This matter is subject to legal proceedings.

### **20389-17 Collier v kentlive.news**

The original version of the online article was headlined 'Police have named a man charged with RAPING a woman near the University of Kent'. The article continued by reporting that the complainant's son had been charged with sexual assault, and committing an offence with the intention of committing a sexual offence, following an incident which took place in June 2017. The article was based on a Police press release which stated 'officers from Kent Police who are investigating a report that a woman was raped, are appealing for witnesses', however the second press release confirmed that the complainant's son had been charged on suspicion of committing a "serious sexual assault". The publication amended the online headline and offered to publish a correction to appear on its homepage for 24 hours. The Committee found that the publication promptly offered a sufficiently prominent clarification, which corrected the inaccurate impression given by the headline by making clear that the complainant's son had not been charged with rape.

**Date decision issued: 22/02/2018**

Further comment:

As above, the issue of the difference between sexual assault and rape has been dealt with in Legal Bulletins and Seminars and the journalists involved in the article were spoken to.

## 5. Schedule

### 5.1 Annex A: List Of Reach plc Titles/Websites

#### 5.1.1 Print

##### National

Daily Mirror

Sunday Mirror

Sunday People

Daily Record

Sunday Mail

##### Regional

Accrington Observer

Airdrie & Coatbridge Advertiser

Ashbourne News Telegraph

Ashford Herald

Atherstone & Colehill Herald (Tamworth Herald Series)

Ayrshire Post

Bangor Mail

Bath Chronicle

Birmingham Mail

Birmingham Post

Black Country Bugle Annual

Black Country Bugle Sports Annual

Blackmore Vale Magazine

Blairgowrie Advertiser

Boston Target

Brentwood Gazette

Bristol Post  
Burry Port & Pembrey Star (Llanelli Star Series)  
Burton Mail  
Bygones (Scunthorpe & Grimsby)  
Caernarfon & Denbigh Herald (Arfon)  
Caernarfon & Denbigh Herald (South)  
Cambridge News  
Carmarthen Journal  
Central Somerset Gazette (Mid Somerset Series)  
Cheddar Valley Gazette (Mid Somerset Series)  
Chester Chronicle (Frodsham & Helsby)  
Chester Chronicle (Country)  
Chester Chronicle (Flintshire)  
Chester Chronicle (Sandbach & Middlewich)  
Chronicle & Informer  
City Guide (Staffordshire)  
Cornish Guardian  
Cornishman  
Coventry Telegraph  
Crewe Chronicle  
Croydon Advertiser (Croydon Advertiser Series)  
Cynon Valley Leader  
Daily Mirror Northern Ireland  
Daily Post  
Derby Telegraph  
Dorking Advertiser  
Dover Express  
Dumfries & Galloway Standard  
Ealing Gazette  
East Coast & Wolds Target  
East Grinstead Courier  
East Kilbride News  
East Riding Mail  
Essex Chronicle

Exeter Express & Echo  
Flashback (Hull)  
Folkestone Herald  
Frome Standard (Mid Somerset Series)  
Fulham Gazette  
Gainsborough Echo  
Galloway News  
Glamorgan Gazette  
Gloucester Citizen  
Gloucestershire Echo  
Greater Manchester Business Week Magazine  
Grimsby Telegraph  
Gwendraeth Valley Star (Llanelli Star Series)  
Gwent Gazette  
Hamilton Advertiser  
Herald Express  
Hertfordshire Mercury  
Heywood Advertiser  
Hinckley Times  
Holyhead & Bangor Mail  
Hounslow Chronicle & Informer  
Huddersfield Daily Examiner  
Hull Daily Mail  
Irvine Herald  
Isle of Thanet Gazette  
Journal (Grimsby & Scunthorpe)  
Journal (Hull)  
Kent & Sussex Courier  
Kilmarnock Standard  
Leatherhead Advertiser  
Leek Post & Times  
Leicester Mercury  
Lennox Herald  
Lichfield Mercury

Lincolnshire Echo  
Liverpool Echo  
Liverpool Sunday Echo  
Llanelli Star (Llanelli Star Series)  
Loughborough Echo  
Macclesfield Express  
Manchester Evening News  
Manchester Weekly News (Salford Edition)  
Manchester Weekly News (Sale & Altrincham)  
Manchester Weekly News (Stretford Urmston)  
Manchester Weekly News (Stockport East)  
Manchester Weekly News (Stockport West)  
Manchester Weekly News (South Manchester)  
Manchester Weekly News (Wilmslow)  
Manchester Weekly News (Tameside)  
Merthyr Express  
Middleton Guardian  
Midweek Visitor  
Mid Devon Gazette  
Nantwich Chronicle  
Newcastle Chronicle  
Newcastle Journal  
News & Mail Series (Aldershot)  
News & Mail Series (Camberley & Sandhurst)  
News & Mail Series (Farnborough)  
News & Mail Series (Fleet & Yateley)  
North Devon Journal  
North Wales Weekly News  
North Wales Weekly News (Conwy Valley & Dyffryn  
Conwy)  
North Wales Weekly News (Colwyn Bay & Abergely)  
Nottingham Post  
Nuneaton News  
Ormskirk Advertiser

Paisley Daily Express  
Perthshire Advertiser  
Plymouth Herald  
Pontypridd & Llantrisant Observer  
Remember When  
Retford Gainsborough & Worksop Times  
Rhondda Leader  
Rhymney Valley Express  
Rochdale Observer  
Rossendale Free Press  
Runcorn & Widnes Weekly News  
Rutherglen Reformer  
Scunthorpe Telegraph  
Seven Oakes Chronicle  
Shepton Mallet Journal (Mid Somerset Series)  
Skelmersdale Advertiser  
Sleaford Target  
Somerset Standard & Guardian  
South Cheshire Chronicle  
South Wales Echo  
South Wales Evening Post  
Southport Visiter  
Staffordshire Newsletter  
Staines Chronicle & Informer  
Stirling Observer  
Stockport Express  
Strathearn Herald  
Sunday Echo  
Sunday Mercury  
Sunday Sun  
Surrey Advertiser  
Surrey Mirror  
Sutton Coldfield Observer  
Swansea Lie



Tamworth Herald (Tamworth Herald Series)  
The Gazette (North East, Middlesbrough & Teesside)  
The Stoke Sentinel  
The Way We Were  
The West Briton  
The Wharf  
Uxbridge Gazette  
Wales On Sunday  
Wells Journal (Mid Somerset Series)  
West Lothian Courier  
Western Daily Press  
Western Gazette (Yeovil)  
Western Gazette (Sherborne)  
Western Gazette (Crewkerne, Chard and Ilminster)  
Western Gazette (Somerton and Langport)  
Western Gazette (Wincanton, Castle Cary, Bruton and Gillingham)  
Western Mail  
Western Morning News  
Widnes Weekly News  
Wishaw Press

### 5.1.2 Websites

[www.accringtonobserver.co.uk](http://www.accringtonobserver.co.uk)  
[www.bathchronicle.co.uk](http://www.bathchronicle.co.uk)<sup>9</sup>  
[www.belfastlive.co.uk](http://www.belfastlive.co.uk)  
[www.birminghammail.co.uk](http://www.birminghammail.co.uk)<sup>10</sup>  
[www.birminghampost.co.uk](http://www.birminghampost.co.uk)  
[www.bristolpost.co.uk](http://www.bristolpost.co.uk)<sup>11</sup>  
[www.burtonmail.co.uk](http://www.burtonmail.co.uk)<sup>12</sup>  
[www.cambridge-news.co.uk](http://www.cambridge-news.co.uk)<sup>13</sup>  
[www.cheshire-live.co.uk](http://www.cheshire-live.co.uk)<sup>14</sup>  
[www.chesterchronicle.co.uk](http://www.chesterchronicle.co.uk)<sup>15</sup>  
[www.chroniclelive.co.uk](http://www.chroniclelive.co.uk)  
[www.cornwalllive.com](http://www.cornwalllive.com)  
[www.coventrytelegraph.net](http://www.coventrytelegraph.net)<sup>16</sup>  
[www.crewechronicle.co.uk](http://www.crewechronicle.co.uk)<sup>17</sup>  
[www.croydonadvertiser.co.uk](http://www.croydonadvertiser.co.uk)<sup>18</sup>  
[www.dailypost.co.uk](http://www.dailypost.co.uk)<sup>19</sup>  
[www.dailyrecord.co.uk](http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk)  
[www.derbytelegraph.co.uk](http://www.derbytelegraph.co.uk)<sup>20</sup>  
[www.devonlive.com](http://www.devonlive.com)  
[www.edinburghlive.co.uk](http://www.edinburghlive.co.uk)<sup>21</sup>  
[www.essexlive.news](http://www.essexlive.news)  
[www.examiner.co.uk](http://www.examiner.co.uk)<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Merged to [www.somersetlive.co.uk](http://www.somersetlive.co.uk) March 2018

<sup>10</sup> Rebranded to Birmingham Live February 2018

<sup>11</sup> Rebranded to Bristol Live April 2018

<sup>12</sup> Merged with [www.staffordshire-live.co.uk](http://www.staffordshire-live.co.uk) August 2018

<sup>13</sup> Rebranded to Cambridgeshire Live June 2018

<sup>14</sup> New publication launched September 2018

<sup>15</sup> Rebranded to [www.cheshire-live.co.uk](http://www.cheshire-live.co.uk) September 2018

<sup>16</sup> Rebranded to Coventry Live April 2018

<sup>17</sup> Merged with [www.cheshire-live.co.uk](http://www.cheshire-live.co.uk) September 2018

<sup>18</sup> Merged with [www.mylondon.news](http://www.mylondon.news) September 2018

<sup>19</sup> Rebranded to North Wales Live December 2018

<sup>20</sup> Rebranded to Derbyshire Live May 2018

<sup>21</sup> New publication launched September 2018

<sup>22</sup> Merged with [www.examinerlive.co.uk](http://www.examinerlive.co.uk) September 2018

[www.examinerlive.co.uk](http://www.examinerlive.co.uk)<sup>23</sup>  
[www.football.london](http://www.football.london)  
[www.gazettelive.co.uk](http://www.gazettelive.co.uk)<sup>24</sup>  
[www.getreading.co.uk](http://www.getreading.co.uk)  
[www.getsurrey.co.uk](http://www.getsurrey.co.uk)<sup>25</sup>  
[www.getwestlondon.co.uk](http://www.getwestlondon.co.uk)<sup>26</sup>  
[www.glasgowlive.co.uk](http://www.glasgowlive.co.uk)  
[www.gloucestershirelive.co.uk](http://www.gloucestershirelive.co.uk)  
  
[www.grimsbytelegraph.co.uk](http://www.grimsbytelegraph.co.uk)<sup>27</sup>  
[www.hertfordshiremercury.co.uk](http://www.hertfordshiremercury.co.uk)  
[www.hinckleytimes.net](http://www.hinckleytimes.net)<sup>28</sup>  
[www.hulldailymail.co.uk](http://www.hulldailymail.co.uk)<sup>29</sup>  
[www.humberbusiness.com](http://www.humberbusiness.com)  
[www.insider.co.uk](http://www.insider.co.uk)  
  
[www.inyourarea.co.uk/news](http://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news)  
[www.kentlive.news](http://www.kentlive.news)  
[www.leeds-live.co.uk](http://www.leeds-live.co.uk)  
[www.leicesterm Mercury.co.uk](http://www.leicesterm Mercury.co.uk)<sup>30</sup>  
[www.lincolnshirelive.co.uk](http://www.lincolnshirelive.co.uk)  
[www.liverpoolecho.co.uk](http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk)  
[www.loughboroughecho.net](http://www.loughboroughecho.net)<sup>31</sup>  
[www.macclesfield-express.co.uk](http://www.macclesfield-express.co.uk)<sup>32</sup>  
[www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk)  
[www.mirror.co.uk](http://www.mirror.co.uk)  
[www.mylondon.news](http://www.mylondon.news)<sup>33</sup>  
[www.nearlythereyet.co.uk](http://www.nearlythereyet.co.uk)

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<sup>23</sup> New publication launched September 2018

<sup>24</sup> Rebranded to Teesside Live June 2018

<sup>25</sup> Rebranded to Surrey Live June 2018

<sup>26</sup> Merged with [www.mylondon.news](http://www.mylondon.news) December 2018

<sup>27</sup> Rebranded to Grimsby Live May 2018

<sup>28</sup> Merged with [www.leicesterm Mercury.co.uk](http://www.leicesterm Mercury.co.uk) August 2018

<sup>29</sup> Rebranded to Hull Live May 2018

<sup>30</sup> Rebranded to Leicestershire Live May 2018

<sup>31</sup> Merged with [www.leicesterm Mercury.co.uk](http://www.leicesterm Mercury.co.uk) August 2018

<sup>32</sup> Merged with [www.cheshire-live.co.uk](http://www.cheshire-live.co.uk) September 2018

<sup>33</sup> New publication launched December 2018

[www.nottinghampost.com](http://www.nottinghampost.com)<sup>34</sup>  
[www.plymouthherald.co.uk](http://www.plymouthherald.co.uk)<sup>35</sup>  
[www.rossendalefreepress.co.uk](http://www.rossendalefreepress.co.uk)  
[www.scunthorpetelegraph.co.uk](http://www.scunthorpetelegraph.co.uk)  
[www.somersetlive.co.uk](http://www.somersetlive.co.uk)  
[www.southportvisiter.co.uk](http://www.southportvisiter.co.uk)<sup>36</sup>  
[www.southwestbusiness.co.uk](http://www.southwestbusiness.co.uk)  
[www.staffordshire-live.co.uk](http://www.staffordshire-live.co.uk)<sup>37</sup>  
[www.stokesentinel.co.uk](http://www.stokesentinel.co.uk)<sup>38</sup>  
[www.walesonline.co.uk](http://www.walesonline.co.uk)

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<sup>34</sup> Rebranded to Nottinghamshire Live May 2018

<sup>35</sup> Rebranded to Plymouth Live May 2018

<sup>36</sup> Merged to [www.liverpoolecho.co.uk](http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk) February 2018

<sup>37</sup> New publication launched August 2018

<sup>38</sup> Rebranded to Stoke-on-Trent Live April 2018

# Northern & Shell

Annual Statement to the Independent Press  
Standards Organisation (IPSO)

*For the period*

***1 January to 31 December 2018***

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## 1. Foreword

The reporting period covers 1 January to 31 December 2018 (“the Relevant Period”).

## 2. Overview

### **REACH PLC**

Reach PLC, formerly Trinity Mirror PLC, acquired the publishing assets of Northern and Shell in May 2018. The Relevant Period covers the transitional phase, as the two companies’ complaints handling protocols were not fully integrated until January 2019. Therefore, for the Relevant Period the position was as follows:

### **NORTHERN & SHELL**

The Northern & Shell network of companies was founded in 1974. It experienced almost four decades of expansion and became a significant force in British and worldwide media, with a portfolio that included newspapers and magazines.

Northern & Shell launched OK! Magazine in 1993 and acquired Express Newspapers in November 2000. Express Newspapers has a 50% joint venture partner in the Irish Daily Star.

Northern & Shell Plc was the publisher of OK! and Star. Northern & Shell Magazines Limited was the publisher of new!.

OK!, new! and Star were weekly magazines that featured celebrity interviews and shoots, news stories, health features, celebrity columns and fashion pages.

Express Newspapers was wholly owned by Northern & Shell Network Ltd and published the Daily Star, Daily Star Sunday, Daily Express and Sunday Express and all their Scottish editions.

Northern & Shell Digital Limited was the publisher of the websites associated with each title.

### **2.1 Publications & Editorial Content**

During the Relevant Period, Northern and Shell published four national newspapers, three weekly magazines and four websites. A full list of Northern and Shell publications is attached to this document.

### 3. Responsible Person

Northern and Shell's Responsible Person during the Relevant Period was Nicole Patterson.

### 4. Northern and Shell

#### **4.1 Editorial Standards**

All editors shared similar editorial standards. Whilst each publication had separate editorial teams, those teams applied the same standards across the range of titles.

Editorial standards were enforced by a combination of the Editorial Director, each Editor and Deputy Editor and by the Managing Editor's office. Editors were assisted by the Editorial Legal Department and by the Group Legal Department.

Every issue of every newspaper and magazine was read either by the Editorial Legal Department or Group Legal Department. The Editorial Legal Department was responsible for the publications in Express Newspapers and Northern & Shell Digital. The Group Legal Department was responsible for the publications in OK!, new! and Star.

By way of education, training and continuing workplace discussion, all editorial staff were directed to operate in line with the current legal framework governing our industry and the Editors' Code of Practice. Both our Bribery Policy and our Social Media Policy were updated.

There were daily and weekly editorial meetings, depending on the publication, in which any issues could be fully aired.

There was regular consultation with the legal department throughout the day, and week, providing immediate pre-publication advice and advice on current and future investigations and proposed items for future publication.

If there were any questions or doubts about the suitability of a story or picture, editorial staff would have referred to their line manager. If doubt continued, then the line managers would have sought legal advice.

Editorial staff were made aware of the legal implications of their work and were encouraged to voice any concerns about stories and pictures they may have had to senior colleagues and/or the Editorial Legal Department.

News and picture departments were expected to communicate regularly with senior editors and production departments to make sure that the respective departments



were aware of the progress of a story and any checks done on the veracity of a source.

Interviews were recorded and preserved wherever possible. Journalists were expected to behave in accordance with the Editors' Code of Practice when conducting interviews.

Agents, representatives, legal representatives and individuals were approached for comment wherever practicable. Our employees were always mindful of the governing legal framework surrounding such conduct. We made every effort to ensure that we did not cause any distress when making such approaches. Our journalists made every effort to verify their stories.

When using photographs from outside sources (either individuals or agencies) we made every effort to contact the agency or photographer to ensure that the photographs had been taken in accordance with the Editors' Code of Practice.

During the Relevant Period, Northern & Shell did not have any occasion to seek pre-publication guidance from IPSO.

## **4.2 Complaints Handling Process**

Editorial complaints alleging breaches of the Editors' Code of Practice for all print and digital titles across the Northern & Shell network of companies were dealt with by the Editorial Legal Department and the Group Legal Department, with the exception of one or two addressed to the Editors personally and received by mail.

The vast majority of editorial complaints came through either our online complaints form, by letter or through IPSO itself. Our form was accessible through our website and complainants were directed to two separate forms, one for grammatical and other errors and one for articles which the complainant believed had been a breach of the Editors' Code of Practice.

All of our publications contained our IPSO statement, a short guide to making digital or paper complaints and instructions on where to find our website address and copy of the Editors' Code of Practice.

Once a complaint was received it was acknowledged as soon as practicably possible and the article removed, if necessary. If the article was to be removed, a legal warning would have been sent to all staff and a copy of the warning placed on our digital library, visible to all staff.

The Editorial Legal Department corresponded with the complainant and, with the help of the editorial team, an attempt was made to reach a mutual settlement. The teams offered a wide range of settlement proposals ranging from the amendment or permanent removal of an online article, to the publication of corrections or apologies.

Corrections and apologies were placed on the same page for each title, unless directed differently by IPSO.

For our hard copy newspaper titles, IPSO complaints were always placed on our Letters or Forum page with the exception of the Daily Star Sunday, which was on page 2.

For our hard copy magazine titles, corrections and apologies were placed on the letters page.

For our digital titles, a short nib of the correction or apology was placed on the homepage with a direction or link to the full page. If a digital article were amended, the reader of the page would usually have been notified of the amendment at the beginning or conclusion of the article.

Our adverse findings were communicated to the relevant journalists and editors. Their attention was drawn to the publication of adjudication, an amendment to the original article or the removal of the article, where appropriate.

The relevant editor communicated directly with his or her staff regarding any article that had been subject of an upheld complaint.

### **4.3 Training Process**

During 2018 the editorial teams continued to be enrolled in an e-learning programme with Eliesha Training Limited, targeted at our IPSO responsibilities, and we followed the online modular course provided by the Press Association.

We continued to roll out our in-house management training programme which began in 2015.

Individual members of the Legal Departments regularly attended outside training for the Continuing Professional Development requirements of their individual governing bodies, together with other seminars and workshops as and when they were available.

A copy of the Editors' Code of Practice sat on all News, Features and Picture Desks and was available on our internal HR page. A list of training materials was available on our internal HR server.

### **4.4 Record on Compliance**

During the Relevant Period Northern and Shell published approximately 276,127 articles both online and in print.

## **DIRECT COMPLAINTS**

In the Relevant Period our print and digital titles, including the Scottish Daily Express, received 70 complaints through our websites' Complaints Form.

In the Relevant Period our print and digital titles received 1 complaint by direct mail.

Four of these complaints were also made to, and accepted by IPSO. Of the remainder, 47 were found not to be breaches of the Editors' Code of Practice by the publication, 20 were resolved by the removal of the article and/or an amendment.

## **IPSO COMPLAINTS**

In the Relevant Period our magazines received 1 complaint, which was not upheld.

Our print and digital titles, including the Scottish Daily Express, received 69 complaints. Of these 20 were withdrawn or abandoned, 6 were not upheld by the Committee, and 8 were upheld but sufficient remedial action had been offered. The remainder were resolved without recourse to the Committee.

Details of upheld adjudications, published and adjudicated upon in 2018, are set out below:

### **4.4.1 Upheld Adjudications Where Sufficient Remedial Action Had Been Offered**

#### **20385-17 Hill v express.co.uk**

Ciaran Hill complained that an article published by [www.express.co.uk](http://www.express.co.uk) headlined "Oxford Circus: Police 'responding like terror attack' as Oxford Street gunman runs amok," published on 24 November 2017 breached Clause 1 (Accuracy) of the Editors' Code of Practice. The complainant said the headline was inaccurate because it presented as fact that a gunman was involved in the rolling news event. It was the position of [www.express.co.uk](http://www.express.co.uk) the article reported on a breaking news story and so the article was subject to frequent updates as additional information became available. At the time of publication there were numerous reports circulating on social media that claimed shots had been fired. As these claims were shown to be inaccurate the headline was changed 15 minutes after it was published and the reference to a gunman was removed. The Committee upheld the complaint but accepted that [www.express.co.uk](http://www.express.co.uk) had promptly updated the headline, to remove reference to the gunman as new details of the incident emerged. The Committee concluded that the publication of a clarification, which made clear that the headline reflected unconfirmed reports and had been changed shortly after publication was sufficient remedial action.

Further comment:

The decision of the Committee was provided to both the news editor who edited the story and the journalist who wrote the article as part of www.express.co.uk internal program to ensure that such errors are identified and correctly resolved.

#### **02580-18 Kirkpatrick v express.co.uk**

Tom Kirkpatrick complained to the Independent Press Standards Organisation that www.express.co.uk breached Clause 1 (Accuracy) of the Editors' Code of Practice in an article headlined "Yellowstone eruption IMMINENT: Supervolcano 'anomaly' triggers fears of volcano to blow", published on 22 March 2018. The article's introduction reported that Yellowstone volcano "could be on the brink of cataclysmic eruption after a pair of researchers uncovered a magma 'anomaly' stretching across the country under the deadly super volcano". The complainant said the article's headline was inaccurate, an eruption was not imminent and this was not what the study had found. In fact the study had simply confirmed a hypothesis that a mantle plume was driving volcanic activity at Yellowstone. www.express.co.uk accepted that the article had included authoritative information stating that an eruption was not "imminent", but also accepted the headline and introduction were significantly misleading because they had been based on social media reaction to the study, rather than on the study itself. This distinction had not been made sufficiently clear. www.express.co.uk offered to amend the headline and introduction to reflect this, and to publish a correction. The Committee upheld the complaint and accepted the remedial action offered by www.express.co.uk.

Further comment:

The decision of the committee was provided to the journalist who had written and published the story. This included examination of the original article, amended article and published correction as part of www.express.co.uk internal program to use such errors as a training exercise to help identify and correct such mistakes.

#### **02623-18 Templeman v dailystar.co.uk**

George Templeman complained that an article headlined, "Russia nuclear strike on Britain would kill 8 MILLION and cripple UK" published on 24 March 2018 and published by the www.dailystar.co.uk breached Clause 1 (Accuracy) of the Editors' Code of Practice. The complainant said the article had inaccurately reported the potential radius that could be affected by a nuclear attack on London. He said that if a 239 mile radius felt the effects of one missile, this would encompass the entire country which was not supported by the simulations shown in the article. www.express.co.uk said

the article had made clear that the potential effects of a nuclear strike were based on Cold War simulations, which it was entitled to report. It provided copies of the declassified documents and screenshots from the simulation website. However the website accepted that the radius that would be affected by a potential nuclear strike had been inaccurately reported in the article. It said that the simulation had shown that the total area affected in the thermal radiation radius would be 384km<sup>2</sup> and the journalist had interpreted this as a radius of 239 miles in error. In fact, the radius was 6.9 miles. The Committee upheld the complaint and found the correction published by [www.express.co.uk](http://www.express.co.uk) meet the requirements to record the error.

Further comment:

The decision of the committee was provided to the journalist who had written and published the story. This included examination of the original article, the simulator used to calculate the blast radius and published correction as part of [www.express.co.uk](http://www.express.co.uk) internal program to use such errors as a training exercise to avoid such mistakes.

#### **02240-18 Agrawal v [express.co.uk](http://www.express.co.uk)**

Roma Agrawal complained to the Independent Press Standards Organisation that [www.express.co.uk](http://www.express.co.uk) breached Clause 1 (Accuracy) of the Editors' Code of Practice in an article headlined "BBC Question Time Live: David Dimbleby hosts Liam Fox and Laura Pidcock in FIREY debate". The article reported that the second question on the show was "With Donald Trump's love of trade wars, will the UK come off badly outside the UK?". It said that, as part of the discussion arising from this question, the complainant had "called for the country to get behind Brexit". The article went on to say that she said she was "bored of politicians arguing between themselves over Brexit", and that she "called for consensus so that Brexit can be made a success". The caption to one photograph of the complainant read: "Roma Agrawal says 'get behind Brexit'" The complainant claimed the article was inaccurate and a breach of Clause 1 (Accuracy); as she had not called for the country to get behind Brexit as the article and photo caption stated. In fact, she was strongly pro-Remain, and had not made any comment in support of Brexit; she had said "I personally am not convinced [about Brexit]"

[www.express.co.uk](http://www.express.co.uk) acknowledged that the article gave a significantly inaccurate account of the complainant's views, and offered to amend the article, photo caption and add a correction. The complainant said that this offer was not sufficient: given the nature of the inaccuracy, and the possible impact on the complainant's political aspirations, a standalone correction and private apology were required.

The committee upheld the complaint but found that [www.express.co.uk](http://www.express.co.uk) had offered to amend the article and append a footnote which included a verbatim account of the complainant's expressed views. This allowed

readers to know the complainant's position in full, and addressed the inaccuracy in the original article. It was sufficient to address the inaccuracy in the article, and as it had already been published, no further action was required.

Further comment:

The decision of the committee was provided to the journalist who had written and published the story. This included examination of the original article, the video upon which the original article was based and the published correction as part of [www.express.co.uk](http://www.express.co.uk) internal program to use such errors as a training exercise.

#### **20562-17 Versi v dailystar.co.uk**

Miqdaad Versi complained to the Independent Press Standards Organisation that [www.dailystar.co.uk](http://www.dailystar.co.uk) breached Clause 1 (Accuracy) of the Editors' Code of Practice in an article headlined, "McDonald's may be forced to close ALL restaurants in London Borough after hijab row," published on 11 December 2017. The article reported on the wider reaction to the event and possible sanctions the restaurant chain could face as a result. It included a statement from Islington Council as follows: "it is not true that McDonalds may be forced to close all its restaurants in Islington. The council does not seek to do this, and in any case has no powers to do so." The complainant said that the headline of the article was not supported by the text, which included the council's position that the headline claim was untrue. He noted that the headline of the article had been changed shortly after publication to "McDonald's may be forced to close in London borough after hijab row". The Committee considered that the appropriate remedy was publication of a correction which made clear that no McDonald's restaurants in the Borough were going to be forced to close as a footnote to the original article and as a standalone correction on the publication's homepage.

Further comment:

The decision of the Committee was provided to both the news editor who edited the story and the journalist who wrote the article as part of [www.express.co.uk](http://www.express.co.uk) internal program to ensure that such errors are identified and correctly resolved. In addition all members of the [www.dailystar.co.uk](http://www.dailystar.co.uk) website were reminded to keep a PDF copy of an article when significant alterations were made to the published article.

#### **02820-18 Sivier v express.co.uk**

The article reported that individuals had been readmitted to the Labour Party following suspensions and said that the complainant had "said it 'may be entirely justified' to say Tony Blair had been 'unduly influenced by a cabal of

Jewish advisers””. It said that “he said he was ‘not pretending it was a big problem’ if Jews were omitted from a list of Holocaust survivors, claiming ‘I’m not going to comment’ on whether thousands or millions died in the Holocaust as ‘I don’t know’”.

The complainant said that a commenter on his website had been listing incidents of anti-Semitism on the Left, and had referred to a leaflet which he said omitted Jews from a list of Holocaust survivors, and put the number of deaths from the Holocaust at thousands, rather than millions. The complainant denied having said that he didn’t know whether thousands or millions of Jews died in the Holocaust. The publication denied that the article was inaccurate. It said that it had relied on the complainant’s own words in describing his comments on his website. Nevertheless, as a gesture of goodwill, the publication offered to publish an extensive explanation from the complainant. The complainant did not dispute that he had written a book defending Ken Livingstone’s comments about Hitler and Zionism.

The Committee decided the complainant had not directly said that he was “‘not going to comment’ on whether thousands or millions died in the Holocaust as ‘I don’t know’”, however found that the offered correction had made clear the complainant’s position and was therefore sufficient.

Further comment:

The decision of the Committee was provided to both the news editor who edited the story and the journalist who wrote the article as part of [www.express.co.uk](http://www.express.co.uk) internal program to notify them of IPSO’s determination.

### **05679-18 Gos v Daily Express**

The article reported that a woman with the same name as the complainant had been subject to a hammer attack in which she was badly injured. The article went on to give more details of the crime, including quotations from witnesses and the woman’s employer. The photograph accompanying the article was of the complainant.

The publication accepted that the photograph had been included in error, and apologised for the distress caused. Two agencies had provided the image, and was subsequently published in good faith. The publication removed the photograph from the article, and offered to publish an apology and correction in print and online.

The Committee considered that a correction was required to make clear that the photograph used had been of the wrong person. Consequently, there was a breach of Clause 1(i) on the part of the publication.

Further comment: The decision of the Committee was provided to the news editor and picture team as part of internal program to notify members of staff of IPSO's determinations and to remind them of the preamble to the Editors' Code which makes clear that publications are ultimately responsible for any breaches of the Code that might result from the use of external contributors.

#### **03349-18 University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust v Daily Express Newspapers**

The article was a comment piece written by Anne Widdecombe. The columnist discussed and compared three high profile cases, including one involving the Trust's care and reported that the Trust was "comprehensively wrong" in one instance.

The newspaper did not accept that it had breached the Code. It emphasised that the article was a comment piece, which reported on the columnist's opinions that had been formed on the basis of publicly available information. The newspaper said that as such, the columnist was not obliged to contact the Trust for its comment prior to publication.

During direct correspondence with the complainant, the newspaper offered to publish a clarification. The complainant did not accept this, as the newspaper had not acknowledged that it had breached the Code, and asked IPSO to begin its investigation into the complaint.

While the columnist was entitled to criticise the Trust's actions in this case, the Committee decided that the article created the significantly misleading impression that the child had been denied this right by the Trust and by the judicial system. This misrepresented the Trust's actions and the outcome of the case; there was a failure to take care over the accuracy of the article, in breach of Clause 1 (i).

The newspaper had offered to clarify the complainant's position during direct correspondence. The Committee noted that the wording was not offered until later in IPSO's investigation. However, in circumstances where the complainant declined the publication's offer to clarify, and decided that they instead wanted IPSO to begin its investigation, the Committee was satisfied that the actions of the newspaper met the requirement for promptness under the terms of Clause 1 (ii).

Further comment:

The decision of the Committee was provided to both the news editor who edited the story and the journalist who wrote the article as part of Express Newspapers internal program to notify them of an IPSO determination.



## 5. Northern and Shell Publications

### **5.1 Print**

OK!

Star Magazine

new! Magazine

Daily Express

Sunday Express

Daily Star

Daily Star Sunday

### **5.2 Online**

[www.dailyexpress.co.uk](http://www.dailyexpress.co.uk)

[www.dailystar.co.uk](http://www.dailystar.co.uk)

[www.ok.co.uk](http://www.ok.co.uk)

[www.new-magazine.co.uk](http://www.new-magazine.co.uk)

[www.star-magazine.co.uk](http://www.star-magazine.co.uk)